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# Brickbats and Bouquets for Marketing

## Introduction

Spanning either side of the 2000, marketing was and continues to be a vibrant force in all markets and nations. The same applies to most businesses in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century as they transitioned or attempted to transition from production, product, and sales orientation toward marketing and/or societal orientation. With 2020 in mind, the subject and its application is embedded in businesses. There may well be some areas of business where marketing has not made its mark, but it is difficult to find exceptions to the general trend.

Marketing in its modern form is an artefact of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Despite kudos and criticism, it has been legitimised by widespread adoption.

For example, from 1991, governments of the collapsed economies of the failed communist experiment (the ex-Comecon countries controlled by the Soviet Union), not only embraced democratic institutions, but also ‘market economies’ and with these - albeit with caveats - the marketing discipline. Within a very few years, the ex-USSR nations were joined by ‘Red’ China who also turned to marketing for its businesses and peoples, while retaining central political command and control. Coase and Wang (2013), for example, noted in their report, that China became a market economy by the end of the 1990’s before it joined the World Trade Organisation in 2001. Moreover, it has moved significantly to become more integrated with the global economy. That said, economic and social disjunctions have yet to arise (see Kitchen, 2003a; 2013). For example, it may not be possible to encourage economic development and liberalisation on the one hand, while retaining political and military hegemony on the other.

However, and despite worldwide presence and practice, there is no generally acceptable theory of marketing extant today. There is, however, a general belief, that such a theory would rest on at least three foundation principles:

1. A sound understanding of the dynamics of served markets
2. Critical examination of opportunities for competitive advantage and implementation of marketing strategies
3. Inside a market-place or -space that is global in form, structure and ubiquity

Underlying these principles or as direct measurable outcomes are market transactions or exchange of money for products or services which appear to offer, at least at face value, to satisfy some perceived need.

The rapid pace of change necessitates periodic review for the subject. For example, the American Marketing Association does this every five years (AMA, 2016). While the purpose of this paper does not address definitional issues per se, questions continue to arise around definition such as:

- What is ‘value’? How is value visible, manufactured, transferred to others, sold or assessed? Is value inherent in all products and services?

- Are customers the ultimate judge of what constitutes value? Or, is value basically the exchange of money for goods and services received?
- Does the marketing creation and communication of value also create problems and difficulties for stakeholders including suppliers and employees?
- Or, does creation of what is perceived to be valuable by customers and consumers also create noise, nuisance or environmental problems for users and non-users?
- Does marketing possess a societal value? If so, how can this be realistically y assessed?
- Is marketing today, consumer orientated? Evidence is needed.

Asking these questions may lead to different replies and reactions, some adversative toward marketing.

Nonetheless, marketing is deeply rooted in most societies. It is contemporaneous. It is relevant. It is national, international and global. Despite caveats, it is applicable to millions of businesses and a rapidly expanding global population (anticipate 11.2 billion people by 2100, compared to 7.4 billion in 2016).

Marketing has become the main connection between businesses and organisations of all types and sizes and customers and consumers. The latter are continually informed that marketing is *in their interest*, seeks to *fulfil their needs*, and changes are invariably presented in a way that are *supposedly beneficial to target audiences*. *But, it may not be seen in these ways by everyone*. (Kitchen, 2003a, 2003b; italics added).

Yet, despite bouquets, and as indicated previously there are some misgivings about marketing. These may not amount as yet to brickbats, yet critical discourse is required if only for the purpose of devils advocacy. For, it is evident that many organisations (business or otherwise) do not adopt a customer or consumer orientation.

This is manifest in many ways –

‘.... difficulties in consumer being able to contact organisations save by labyrinthine methods; a [perceived] disinterest and disinclination by businesses to treat consumers with respect; products that do not deliver proclaimed benefits and perhaps are incapable of so doing; services that do not match expectations; and products that while they satisfy needs also damage consumers and the environment. And, despite the advent of customer services in many organisations, these – at times – seem purposely designed to keep customers away from influencing businesses and/or their marketing processes in any way as evidenced by the rising popularity of consumer watchdog programs’ (see Kitchen, 2003).

Media exposure seems to have a much greater effect in bringing about consumer recompense than most other activities. By way of analogy, below two companies or brands are presented who recently have been in the firing line of on-line and off-line media scrutiny and criticism:

#### ➤ **EpiPen, USA**

In the USA, Mylan, amid a basketful purchase of medicines from Merck KGaA, acquired EpiPen – an auto injector for food allergy and bee-sting emergencies. Marketing was used to boost sales to concerned parents of children with allergies. Since acquisition (2007), EpiPen has been transformed from aging device to brand blockbuster. In the process, somehow wholesale prices have risen 400%. In the USA, a

package of two EpiPens costs approximately \$415, compared to France where the same product sold by another company is a mere \$85. Naturally, the marketing process was accompanied by extensive government and departmental lobbying resulting in legislation favourable to Mylan, marketing public relations, sponsorship and arrangements with schools and theme parks such as Disney to stock the products. Prices accelerated in line with advertising expenditure which mushroomed from \$4.8 in 2011 to \$35.2m in 2014. In 2007, when Mylan bought the product, it had around \$200m in annual sales. In 2016 it will exceed \$1billion (Koons & Langreth, in Bloomberg (2016). Notably, there are mutterings and murmurings of discontent around high prices and profiteering. Media attention remains high. Undoubtedly the old age that price is a matter of perceived value, not cost will aired at some point.

➤ **BT You View and Internet Access**

While Mylan and EpiPen are successful so far, in the UK BT (British Telecom) UK went to significant lengths to promote YouView which delivers television on demand to homes. BT introduced a new set top box which, according to the marketing, was and potentially still is one of the easiest ways to watch [loved] programs. BT's initial marketing outlay was in the order of £70million (Bulkley, 2012). Every on- and off-line media was deployed to persuade consumers to subscribe. But, having subscribed, there were significant technological problems. Often, the system simply did not work, or worked badly, leaving consumers to access online help facilities (often useless) or to communicate directly with BT or its affiliates via telecom personnel who seemed poorly qualified or simply not trained to deal with specific technical issues or associated complaints. And it was not a just a matter of one call – problem solved! Most consumers make multiple calls, often lasting for long periods of time, and are often passed from internal telecom pillar to post. In each call or contact, consumers have to *start again*, as no record is kept of continuous or ongoing issues, or how a previous call by the same subscriber ended up last time. This repetitive and time-wasting process is of great irritation to customers and often leads to market churn and movement to competitive alternatives where possible. But, of course, while complaining, customers are still tied to the same supplier and may be contractually locked-in (Kitchen, 2015, 127).

Meanwhile, BT problems continue to escalate in terms of internet connectivity. Put simply, BT spend more time and money on corporate and marketing communications (i.e. £738m in terms of premier league football TV rights), and far less time and money in having sufficient engineers and qualified after sales personnel to support their customers and consumers in their legitimate request for help, explanation, assistance or for problems to be put right expeditiously (Boyce, 2016)

Further, in the international/global arena, globalisation and the activities of multinationals support the hypothesis that [poor] service for customers and impoverishment for production operatives seem to be inextricably intertwined. For example, there are 82,000 multinational companies in the world, controlling 810,000 foreign affiliates, and accounting for one third of world trade. Often it is claimed that their employment practices reflect that of the host country! This is countermanded however in many cases, as often a large proportion (in some cases all) of their production capacity is generated in third world countries, at low cost, where workers are paid miniscule wages while having no access to social security support systems or access to worker organisations such as trade unions. Often this keeps workers in a never-ending and vicious cycle of poverty (see Edwards and Marginson, 2016) which can impact on corporate performance in terms of sales, market share, and corporate reputation.

Yes, marketing may create exchanges, but do these exchanges deliver desired customer satisfactions? And, to what extent does satisfaction of consumer needs, simultaneously create dissatisfaction for

others? Perhaps even annoyance for other people, for the nation, and/or serve to damage the environment in some way?

Further, in some sectors where business goes to great lengths to laboriously dictat social 'responsibility', social *irresponsibility* may be more of a norm. Corporate examples since 2008 of failed or failing banks and financial institutions, together with the government monitoring bodies who also failed in their fiduciary duties, while both went unpunished, is a remarkable and – so far – almost invisible chapter in economic history. In the end, governments bailed out these institutions, who then seemed to have degrees of freedom to continue 'business as usual' for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, those paying the price – the electorate – have been seriously punished by retributive measures which are also ongoing. For example the UK government bailout of banks in 2009 cost £850million which equals £26,562 for each taxpayer with so far no recoupment of this 'investment' from a consumer/electorate perspective. At the same, those with savings - mainly retired people or pensioners – apparently have little or no possibility of earning any interest on their savings. Further, the value of the UK Pound has fallen sharply relative to other major currencies. In summary, bailouts benefited business-as-usual banks while consumers have been left to carry the ongoing economic residual fallout (Skinner, 2016). It is small wonder that lack of trust in government and politicians continues to fall.

Looking at from a marketing perspective, it would seem that marketing within the financial and banking services sector is an organisational activity more concerned with rhetoric than anything else. The same may be true in the political domain where marketing (analysis, planning, and implementation) is mainly rhetorical in nature in that few or no benefits are offered to the electorate once an election is over. Perhaps marketing in the political sphere serves only to denigrate and de-legitimise marketing itself?

So, when we consider the role of Marketing in the 21<sup>st</sup> century should brickbats or bouquets be extended to the discipline? Some nascent outcomes may be:

- Marketing is a powerful and dynamic force (bouquet)
- It has visible weaknesses and problems from an organisational and consumer perspective (brickbats)
- It can be seen as a nuisance, or in the communication domain as a form of leviathan (brickbats)
- And, there are many examples of success and failure (bouquets and brickbats)

However, there seems to be no substitute for marketing in the world as presently constituted. Alternatives have been tried, tested, and failed. If we accept the need for choice, then to some degree, we accept the notion of markets. Marketers must have some degrees of freedom in which to market goods and services. The notion of an orientation that seeks to satisfy consumers and their needs profitably, however, seems a rather weak approach to marketing perse. Most marketing today is organisationally and competitively focused. As stated earlier, the idea that marketing is being done for and on behalf of customers and consumers seems more a form of rhetoric than some deep underlying philosophy of business. Thus, the warts of marketing are visible. Perhaps over time, these can be eradicated, removed, or ameliorated?

### **Brickbats and Bouquets for Marketing**

We emphasise that this subject or topic is not 'new'. Marketing's legitimacy or relevance has been questioned by many leading exponents of the discipline dating back almost to its inception. For

example, the words of the opening essay on Theory in Marketing, (Cox, Alderson and Shapiro, 1964) Michael Halbert offers the following:

‘In any examination of the organised behaviour system we called civilisations, we can observe some people devoted to reflection on the nature and operation of various activities of such systems. These people are often distinguished from those more active in the conduct of affairs by calling the first group, thinkers, and the second group, doers. It is abundantly clear, however, that in many areas of human activity, developments occur without any serious attempt to be reflective about their origins, their current activities, and their possible future. The greatest period of culture growth have not necessarily coincided with the periods of greatest reflection.

If we look at the current state of marketing activity and marketing thought, two apparently incongruous pictures appear. In the world as a whole and in the United States in particular, marketing is flourishing. It is growing and changing more quickly than perhaps any other institution of the society and rapidly increasing its impact on the total economic system. As an activity, then, marketing is both dynamic and progressive.

But when we look at the development of and the present state of marketing theory the picture is just the reverse. From the point of view of the aid that theory can furnish to the practitioner, marketing has very little to offer. From the viewpoint of the established sciences, marketing has no theory that is defensible on the grounds of its logical consistency, philosophic adequacy, or experimental foundation. Why is it that we have and can have a marketing practice that is highly successful without an equally successful development of marketing theory?’ (Halbert, 1964)

Presumably, Halbert’s paper was chosen as the lead article or chapter for a reason, perhaps because of the authors’ erudition or power of argument. It serves in identifying several factors that were relevant at that time:

1. There was incongruity between marketing practice - which was then and even more now with social media and e-commerce flourishing, i.e. ‘increasing its impact on the total economic system’ - and marketing theory. The perceived ‘disconnect’ between theorists and practitioners continues to this day. The elements of practice and theory are not well juxtaposed.
2. Marketing was perceived then (and now) to be both dynamic and progressive

A further disconnect seems to be between what marketing claims and offers, and what customers, consumers and others in society actually receive. For example and before proceeding , we consider the work of theorist Richard Bartels. He was perhaps one of the most prolific writers on the subject of marketing thought and marketing development (see for example, Shaw and Tamilia, 2001), and in 1962, he envisaged what he described as ‘the maturing of marketing thought’ (see Bartels, 1964). His book contains a full bibliography of the marketing literature from 1900 to 1960. From the bouquets perspective, Bartels (1964, *ibid*) noted the following - presented below in first tense:

- It is a purposeful practical body of thought
- .... based upon definite concepts of marketing
- .... scientifically developed
- A well-integrated, established body of thought has been produced
- It has .... furnished a basis for improvement of marketing practice
- Through the evolution of marketing thought, scientific methodology has been introduced into distribution and research



- Marketing thought represented a new interpretation of the primary service objective in business
- Marketing thought has contributed concepts and terminology to the body of common thought
- Thought in other sciences has been enriched by ideas from marketing thought
- Marketing thought has furnished principles that are applicable beyond the borders of our own social and political environment for the benefit of mankind in general

From the brickbats perspective, Bartels (pages 211-213) also noted:

- There was (and still is) no unanimous agreement of what the form or content of marketing should be
- Marketing theory ... ranges widely .. but has no logical framework ... little or no relevance to reality
- Marketing thought .... tends to be largely vocational in nature
- The marketing concept has .... not kept pace with social change
- New concepts and new principles are required
- Little or no explanation of marketing as a social institution rather than simply as a business system has been offered
- Marketing tends to be descriptive than analytical in nature

As a further example in 1988, Sheth, Gardner and Garrett published their milestone book on marketing theory which considered the evolution and evaluation of twelve schools of marketing thought leading towards a much-needed general metatheoretical framework of marketing based on six basic criteria. While stimulating to read, and revolutionary in its consideration of different theories at best, only well-established elements of marketing (agreed by most) were identified.

By 2010, Shelby D. Hunt's (2010, reprinted 2015), book – as its title makes plain, considers not only the latest state of play in marketing, but outlines ongoing controversies worthy of address.

However, at this time of writing, few attempts had been made to look at marketing from the perspective of customers and consumers, despite marketing's oft-trumpeted assertion that 'marketing seeks to satisfy their needs'....

From a conference perspective, change in marketing has been discussed and recommended on many occasions. For example, in 2001, the marketing and strategy group at Cardiff University organised a research event - under the auspices of the Academy of Marketing - entitled: 'in search of excellence for research in marketing'. This served the stated purpose – i.e. analysing what marketing was then and what it should be in the future. The outcomes were not auspicious – no need for radical change was needed, save for tinkering around the edges of the discipline. Nonetheless, the conference did stimulate lively debate and conjecture. It also revealed the impressions of many attendees that UK businesses were notoriously poor when it came to serving and satisfying customers and their needs. As noted two years later by Kitchen (2003b):

'even as academics proclaim the virtues of an American-led marketing concept in lecture theatres, and as marketing managers polish the trappings of marketing, so the substance of marketing seems to [continually] escape attention' (bracketed word added).

Not to be left out, Bentley University, hosted by a one-day conference in July 2004 titled 'Does Marketing Need Reform?'. Attended by many marketing academics and practitioners, including



ourselves, most noted that marketing was - at that time - 'off track' - and serving neither customers nor companies well. The overall outcome was:

'Steering marketing in the right direction will require new perspectives, new frameworks and a renewed commitment to the highest ideals of marketing: serving customers individually and society as a whole by synergistically aligning company, customer and societal interests'.

This new direction outlined three themes:

1. To challenge extant mental models of marketing
2. Consider customer advocacy as the start of a new paradigm in marketing
3. Consider marketing in an interconnected world

It was surprising to one of the authors (Kitchen), that conference presenters, did not consider marketing outside of North America (the USA). The conference led to a book some two years later of the same title (Sheth and Sisodia, 2006) and sections of the book are referred to below. The opening statement from the Editors (Ibid, 3) underlines many of the issues evoked in this [current] paper:

More than 30 years ago, Peter Drucker wrote:

"Despite the emphasis on marketing and the marketing approach, marketing is still rhetoric rather than reality in far too many businesses. "Consumerism" proves this. *For what consumerism demands of business is that it actually market. It demands that business start out with the needs, the realities, the values of the customer. It demands that business define its goal as the satisfaction of customer needs. It demands that business base its reward on its contribution to the customer.* That after twenty years of marketing rhetoric, consumerism could become a powerful popular movement proves that not much marketing has been practiced. Consumerism is the "shame of marketing."

"Drucker's characterization remains as true today as it ever was. Instead of acting as partners engaged in mutually rewarding co-destiny relationships, *too many marketers and consumers continue to be locked into mistrustful, adversarial relationships in which there is a constant tug-of-war to determine which side can benefit disproportionately and unfairly.*

"It has been evident for many years that *"marketing as usual"* is simply not working any more, and that fundamentally new thinking is needed to revive and rejuvenate this most vital and potentially noble of business functions—one that *has, unfortunately, become the object of skepticism and distrust among many of its stakeholders'* (nb, italics added),

Our own observations over the past decade or so lead us to say that marketing has been losing efficiency as well as effectiveness over time. However, in the next section, we will summarise arguments put forward by contributors to the Sheth and Sisodia edited book (2006). It is evident that few of the contributors had entirely positive things to say about marketing.

Marketing faced three fundamental problems and the need for reform in some way is manifest.

- It suffers from a poor image with consumers as well as with business professionals
- It seems to turn to excess
- It is now encountering serious resistance from consumers

The sections of the book are revealing and offer an interesting commentary on the state of marketing at that time. These will serve as topics for discussion below:

### *Mirror, Mirror on the Wall, Marketing's Image, Excess and Resistance Problems*

Undoubtedly, marketing is open to scrutiny, given its close connections with selling, persuasion and the profit imperative. Given the accelerative trend of globalisation, instantaneous communication via the internet, and the turning of many governments to market-driven policies, many consumers consider marketing and advertising (the latter is a proxy for all forms of consumer-focussed communication or promotion) as being inextricably intertwined and indicates that persuasive communications has become more of an intrusive nuisance than anything else. This view is not shared by marketing directors or brand managers, indicative of a disconnect between the imperative to persuade, retain and sell versus presumably receivers or consumer needs to be left alone without interference from a myriad of offline and online communication modalities. It was estimated that communication via all offline and online forms would cost over one trillion (US) dollars in 2010 (Kitchen et al, 2006, and, despite the recession from 2008, global adspend will amount to \$552bn in 2017, and when combined with other marketing activities, total marketing expenditures worldwide will push past the \$1 trillion threshold, according to GroupM.(Warc, 2016). It is interesting that many years ago Theodore Levitt of Harvard (1960) commented that 'many large companies get stuck in formulated marketing, looking into a mirror when they should be looking out of the window'. It seems as if managers may still be stuck in this modality today.

### *Are Marketing's Problems Self Correcting?*

As found at Cardiff in 2001 and the Barton Conference of 2004, the overall impression from both meetings was that marketing problems could be corrected, and therefore incremental adjustment of some elements of marketing would be both desirable and appropriate. Several scholars such as Stephen Brown, Debra Ringold, Shelby Hunt, Russ Winer, and Dave Stewart to name a few, while admitting or at least acknowledging that criticisms can legitimately be levelled at marketing (i.e. deserving of some brickbats) confirm this perspective. Consumers can 'navigate markets', make inherently sound 'moral choices', and 'enjoy competitive choice'. So, marketers may not have done well in terms of promoting marketing as a discipline in and of itself. Moreover, marketing can be reinvented, and may be capable of reinventing itself. Yet, such reinvention and recommendations for change have been made continually since the 1960's, yet the notion of a greater consumer orientation seems not have taken hold in the minds of marketing practitioner or marketing theorists. It seems that some type of consumer revolt, driven by disgruntled consumers who with their hearts, minds and behaviour, walk away from poor practice, may have a greater remedial effect. Another issue is we cannot step outside time to (re)assess cultural practice. It seems well-nigh inconceivable now that little children could work full-time in cotton factories, or they with their half-naked mothers could be sent to work in coal mines. Such behaviour and employment practices to produce cotton or coal would be condemned today. It is not beyond imagination that social systems which allow multinationals to rule the world and for over \$1trillion to be spent on promotion to persuade people of tiny product differences in 2016 may be roundly condemned by citizens of 2116. However, we will not be around to see this. Thus, if the (marketing) system were indeed 'self-correcting' from 1960, we would likely see evidence of such self-correction by now.

### *Rethinking Marketing's Sacred Cows*

This area of discussion has been well trodden by marketing and advertising academics and practitioners and particularly since the advent of the Internet and resultant greater consumer empowerment. Jerry

Wind, Greg Lundach, V. Kumar, Girish Ramani, Glen Urban, Alladi Venkatesh, Lisa Penaloza, advocate re-examining older mental models and in developing replacements. We also live in a day of presumably enlightened empowered consumers aided by social media and the internet far beyond the scope of the times when the original mental models were derived (many during the 'golden age of marketing' from the 1950s and 1960s). Yes, there is an increasing need for customer advocacy including dialogue, interaction, empowerment, even co-creation. Any new marketing paradigm must or should exhibit 'fluidity of form... such marketing would resemble a neural network that constantly re(or - de) constructs itself' (Firat and Dholakia, 2006). Yet, how hard it is to let go of old , tried and tested, marketing models of the past. In the communication domain, the elaboration likelihood model (developed in the 1980's) was the most cited and used model by theorists and practitioner well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, alongside the AIDA model. Yet, evidence shows that the ELM does not work in the multi-media markets of today (see Kitchen et al, 2014; Kerr et al, 2015). Further Schultz (2016) has pointed out that many advertising practitioners operate on old worn-out models of communication some of which were developed in the 1950's and may not work today. An old adage (source unknown) comes to mind:

The sermon was ended,  
The priest had descended.  
Much delighted were they,  
But .. they preferred the old way.

Perhaps social change, cultural change, technological acceleration diffusion and time itself will facilitate changes in marketing and communication practice and theory?

*Adjusting to Marketing's Changing Context*

As touched upon in the previous sections, marketing needs to become more attuned and responsive to environmental circumstances and current contexts whether they be national in scope or increasingly global in scale. In Sheth and Sisodia (2006), there is repeated reference to marketing being or becoming a more 'noble' profession in the eyes of the public. 'Nobility' in and of itself is an appellation that is difficult to apply to any profession in 2016, and seems an unlikely aspiration for marketing. However, we can anticipate perhaps the impact of demography, information technology acceleration, proliferation and accessibility that serves to empower consumers, together with a heightened sensitivity to ethical issues as recommended by Philip Kotler, Kent Monroe and Lan Xia, David Woolfe, Tim Ambler, Jagdish Sheth and Rajenda Sisodia, Pierre Berthon and Joby John. Irrespective of theoretical theorising and practitioner practice and procrastination, market dynamics i.e. contexts will continue to undergo change. Peter Drucker, in his quietly prescient manner, reminds us that:

'the business that keeps on doing what it is doing now, will fail'

And, echoing Theodore Levitt. he argued:

"The purpose of business is to create and keep a customer Drucker, 2004a and b)"

Further he added:

"What does our customer find valuable?" is the most important question companies can ask themselves"

These statement perhaps underpinned and overgirded by by environmental change, may assist in reorienting marketing away from selling and advertising and onto higher planes.

### *Marketing and its Stakeholders*

Admittedly much of marketing tends to be focussed on customers and consumers and many early definitions, eras and conceptualisation locate attention here. However, we are reminded by Katherine Lemon and Seiders, Russell Belk, Susan Douglas and C. Samuel Craig, Kerry Chip, Scott Hoenig and Deom Nel, Anne Stringfellow and Sandy Jap, of the need for marketing accountability to a wider range of stakeholders in national, international and global settings. For example, brand equity extends well beyond loyal customers to include other stakeholders. These stakeholders include all publics who could be and often are impacted or likely to be impacted by marketing practice. We would tend to agree with this widening of marketing activity and accountability though perhaps by stopping short of societal orientation which tends to smack of paternalistic activities. As marketing has grown in terms of being an environmental force to be reckoned with, it cannot be restrained from interactions with a wider range of stakeholders. Equally, it is to be anticipated that a wider range of intelligent, questioning and critical stakeholders will be far more attentive to the activities of business and may lose no time in disseminating unethical and/or poor practices via the technological facilitators at their fingertips.

### *Academia, Heal Thyself: Reforming Marketing Scholarship and Education*

Whoa! This is a difficult and contentious area. Do marketing scholars need to change their scholarly activities in some way to ensure their value to practitioners, consumers and society at large? Is this possible? William Wilkie, Gary Lilien, Rajiv Grover, Jagmohan Raju, Morris Holbrook, and Rajan Varadarajan et al also suggest the attempt is worthwhile and worth making as stated in Sheth and Sisodia (2006). We heartily endorse this type of change to ensure relevance and meaningfulness to the wider range of stakeholders mentioned in the previous section. However, marketing scholars are not fully in control of their own destiny. 'Relevance' to businesses and other stakeholders, for example, has been supplanted by 'impact' to a largely academic audience in the UK's regular 'research excellence framework'. Inevitably, scholars have to produce research outputs in .... primarily... academic journals. All journals are ranked. The higher the rank, the greater the propensity for promotion and tenure and the more kudos for the school or academic institution. To be accepted, one has to write in the desired mode. Other modes can indeed be adopted, but will not lead to acceptance or publication. One could term this 'the production line syndrome'. Once on that line, academics are not free to write what they wish or even perhaps what is needed. It takes little insight to note that if, for example, Theodore Levitt, had not been working at Harvard, or better if he were to work there today, or at some third world institution elsewhere the probability of desk rejection of his papers would be the only outcome...i.e. no literature review, no methodology, no findings, simply well written polemic does not cut much ice in today's academic world. Teaching, again of relevance to the real world, is again not always at the behest of academic professors. Instead, received wisdom, creeping incrementalism, and outworn ideas can become the norm. For example, the validity of the marketing concept can be tested inside the very universities where students are taught. The need for change is evident. It can be envisaged. Whether that change can take place within current constraints is open for conjecture.

### **The Contribution of Peter Drucker**

In 2009, the Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, published a special issue concerning a tribute to Peter Drucker who is often regarded as the father of modern marketing. Peter Drucker saw marketing as a core responsibility of management. He first wrote about marketing during the era of dominant

hierarchical and closed corporations such as G.E., AT&T and GM, and similar companies in the UK would include P&G, Unilever, and BP (see Darroch, Day, Slater, 2009). Drucker saw that marketing

- 'is so basic that it cannot be considered a separate function within the business.... it is the whole business seen from the customers point of view' ....
- and
- 'customers don't buy products, they buy satisfaction' (Drucker, 1954)

These are positions that few marketers would debate. Yet, this special issue goes on to show that the context of marketing has changed from closed hierarchical business monoliths to the ideal of globally connected and networked organisations with increasingly open business models (Chesborough, 2007; Fung et al, 2007; Ghemawat, 2007), where customers are looked upon as part of the firm's value creation process (Darroch et al, 2009). Admittedly, these new models may be fine in theory, but whether customers and consumers feel themselves to be contributors to marketing seems at its very earliest stages of development. In 2008, three years after his death, Drucker's revised book on Management (2008) suggested that firms

'participate in a world economy of networks based on partnership rather than alliances.... With alliances driven by technology needs, marketing needs, by peoples needs'

Darroch et al, are joined in the special issue of the Journal by Jenny Darroch's interview with Peter Drucker completed October 1<sup>st</sup> 2004, Rick Wartzman's recorded interview of A.G. Lafley, Chairman and CEO of Proctor & Gamble, Philip Kotler, ranked 4<sup>th</sup> marketing guru of all time by the Financial Times (after Jack Welch, Bill Gates, and Peter Drucker), Fred Webster, Yoram Wind, Joseph Maciariello, Tom Donaldson, Can Uslay, Robert Morgan and Jagdish Sheth, Jeffrey Wallman, N. Craig Smith, and Jakki Mohr. This stellar range of invited scholars and practitioners were united in their praise of Drucker's contributions, yet all acknowledge the need to recast his contributions in the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Drucker himself acknowledges this imperative in his interview as there remained (for him) a marked tendency to consider 'business' or businesses from the perspective of senior managers and/or academic theorists. These, admittedly, may cast their own brickbats of ineptitude, of failure, yet, at the same proclaim the virtues of marketing and extend their bouquets, perhaps in the absence of any available and useful alternative theoretical device or implementational mechanism. Darroch's interview of Drucker (2004) is particularly pertinent as Drucker himself couches his comments about marketing and business (seen as interchangeable) in both brickbat and bouquet terms: .....

- The great majority of businesses are .... inwardly focused and needfully so
- The greatest marketing challenges lie among non-profit institutions
- Businesses need to focus upon their core group – supermarkets = customers, banks = services, the customer defines the business
- I don't understand the AMA definition of Marketing... it is too long... likely written by a psychology professor
- Businesses are not the dominant American institution
- There is no disconnect between ... the organisation and the customers, particularly in non-profits.
- The drawback in P&G? People know brands, but may not know companies.



- Customer loyalty if it exists (between you and me, it doesn't exist), will be to a brand, not to a company. There is no customer loyalty to a company.
- Businesses (2004) do not necessarily want to have a connection to their customers
- Customer have far too much choice and not enough difference..
- The choice between price and service... 'there ain't no service that a 5% price can't overcome'... that is largely true.

Thus, while bouquets or plaudits can be extended to marketing in terms of its tremendous range, reach and applicability, accompanying these are complaints, criticisms or what we have termed here as brickbats. Evidently, both must co-exist until such time as businesses and customers achieve rapprochement, a position that may lie in the far distant future, though evidently anticipated by academic writers as cited above.

### **The Contribution of the Authors and Other Theorists**

We have sought to address this incongruent dualism (Kitchen, 2015, 2016; Sheth, 2016a and 2016b). Sheth (2006a) has indicated the progression from organised to accountability to responsibility marketing with the underpinning forces of change being Maslow's hierarchy, concerns for sustainability (which may vary from country to country (e.g. see Nishant, Goh & Kitchen, 2015), the social media revolution, and that the business of business are more than business (unlike Levitt, 1958). Sheth makes it clear that marketing needs to take the lead in expanding its own role, especially as it has:

- enormous power to influence markets, especially in consumption based cultures
- a negative image, both within organisations, and society at large

The three types of marketing are shown in Figure 1 below:

Figure1: Organised vs. Accountability vs. Responsibility Marketing

Characteristic	Organised Marketing	Accountability Marketing	Responsibility Marketing
<b>Mission</b>	Makes vs. Buy	ROI	Doing well by Doing Good
<b>Objective</b>	Market share	Share of Wallet (CRM)	Share of Heart (Firms of Endearment)
<b>Competition</b>	Unbranded Competitors	Branded Competitors	Nontraditional competitors
<b>Marketing Capability</b>	Brand Creation	Brand Rationalization	Brand Purpose
	4 P's of Marketing	SKU reduction	Stakeholder Marketing
<b>Business Operations</b>	Mass Production, Distribution, Communication	Contract Manufacturing	Sustainability
		Automation	Triple Bottom-line
		Outsourcing	In Sourcing

Strategy	Organic Growth	Synergy (M&A)	Consumer Well-being
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While, it can be argued that consumer well-being needs to replace customer satisfaction and net promoter score (NPS) measures, however, connections between consumer and company financial well-being needs to be demonstrated.

Thus, marketing has offered and still offers the power to influence, especially in consumption driven cultures. It can indeed become a positive societal force. The best option to embrace consumer well-being is via consumer-driven competitive strategy.

This said, while consumer well-being may seem a striking mission for marketing companies, stakeholder marketing may also be possible. Even here, however, the focus tends to be in the name of customers and consumers, while not necessarily interacting with them, save at arms-length and in ways that could be described as ‘traditional’. Thus, the rhetoric associated with marketing appears to be alive and well and insofar as it works, bouquets can be extended. However, it is the domain of reality, where real interactions take place, that at the very least, brickbats of a non-physical nature can be considered.

**A New Mission for Marketing**

As indicated by academicians and practitioners over time and as cited in the body of this paper, over time, marketing has resulted in a positive contribution to societies. Currently, it is the only mechanism for bringing about mutually beneficial exchanges between producers and providers of good and services and the needs of profit seeking corporations. Thus, the essentiality of marketing can hardly be discountenanced or countermanded. There is no replacement mechanism, theory, method or practice for exchange that works in the world as it is presently constituted. Thus, from this perspective, bouquets can be extended to the marketing discipline and its practice and to academic and practitioner and academic commentators who have done so much to disseminate it.

From a brickbats perspective marketing faces challenges and problems. For, it is beset from both within and without from various stakeholder forces. Marketing needs to regain its influence in businesses and its credibility in society. Focus on short term tactics and sales needs to be augmented by long term strategy and profitability, with a social purpose. The business of business is more than business. Effectiveness and consumer trust need to be regained. There are no short term or quick fix solutions. Rather they are long term and strategic in nature. Sound marketing practice – implemented today needs to be judged in the crucible of markets. We have seen already that much of marketing is bound up with rhetoric and communication. Moreover, the ascending cacophony is not only repetitive and annoying, but tends to alienate readers, listeners, observers not to mention stakeholders, customers and consumers. Moreover, while much can be said concerning the training of future students in terms of social responsibilities and business ethics, it is difficult to point to one area of social life where sound exemplars are clearly visible.

**Toward a Conclusion**

Undoubtedly, marketing is important and on the whole we are optimistic that marketing can be an even greater force for societal good. This is due to three reasons. First, power has shifted to the users with the spectacular growth of social media and its use by consumers. Today, you cannot hide from being exposed to your bad behaviour. Second, all advanced companies are aging, and aging rapidly. Companies are desperate for growth. This will result in investing in the two real functions of business:



innovation and marketing, as Peter Drucker articulated long ago. Both are revenue generators. All other functions are costs. And we need revenue growth desperately.

Innovation is accelerating as new breakthroughs in the digital age, such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), millions of Apps and democratization of consumption through dramatic price reductions with superior performance in flat screen televisions, cell phones and personal computers and tablets. Marketing as a growth engine is arising as market transactions are becoming more and more online. Who would have predicted the level of revenue generated by Amazon? It provides an unprecedented number of products and will soon start offering services.

Finally, there is growing concern that free competitive markets lead to market failures. This was amply demonstrated by the housing bubble which led to major recession in 2008. Governments have been forced to become accountable to citizens for product safety (Toyota Airbags), product promise (Volkswagen fuel manipulation), and recent skyrocketing price increases in the healthcare sector (Epi Pen, health insurance). Therefore, markets will be more regulated and governments will take companies to court for their bad marketing.

Jag and I stand on the sidelines, bouquets in one hand, brickbats in the other. Which should be cast? We'll let the reader decide.

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